

talked with VA Secretary Jesse Brown about the need for a Veterans' Home in Chula Vista, California. She was at the table when we spoke to VA Secretary Principi about providing medical equipment and supplies to the Veterans Hospital in Manila. She helped to bring a Community Based Outpatient Clinic to Imperial County, California and the Miramar National Cemetery to San Diego, California, with a groundbreaking scheduled for January 30, 2010.

Her important legislative achievements include passage of several bills for veterans, including a bill to provide a posthumous Purple Heart to the families of every prisoner of war who died while in a prison camp, a bill to provide compensation to World War II Merchant Mariners who were excluded from the original GI Bill benefits, and legislation to restore equity and promised benefits to the Filipino World War II veterans who were deprived of both by an act of Congress in 1946.

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to Sharon for 26 years of working together, learning together, and achieving together. As a former history professor, I believe that we have changed a small piece of history.

CONDEMNING THE GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA'S ANTI-HOMOSEXUALITY BILL

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak out against Bill No. 18, the Anti-Homosexuality Bill of 2009, which will soon be considered for passage by the government of Uganda. This proposed legislation criminalizes and punishes homosexuality, thereby endangering the lives of all Ugandans and threatening their civil and human rights. This is outrageously discriminatory and deeply troubling.

The Anti-Homosexuality Bill was introduced as a Private Member's Bill by Ugandan Member of Parliament David Bahati of the National Resistance Movement Party on April 29, 2009. Following adoption, it was published in the Uganda Gazette on September 25, 2009, according to the procedural rules of the Ugandan Parliament. A vast majority of governments throughout the world, including the United States, continue to deny full civil rights and protections to their lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, LGBT, citizens. However, the Anti-Homosexuality Bill takes this to a deadly extreme.

This legislation condemns HIV-positive citizens, including minors, who engage in consensual homosexual acts to death and sentences citizens who engage in consensual homosexual acts to life imprisonment. The Anti-Homosexuality Bill also seeks to persecute LGBT citizens living abroad by extraditing them for acts committed outside Uganda, including those who are also dual citizens of Uganda and the United States. Furthermore, this legislation requires known homosexuals to be reported to the authorities within 24 hours; failure to do so would result in a jail term of up to 3 years. This applies to Ugandan nationals and dual citizens living abroad, as well as any person who witnesses such an act within

Uganda, regardless of whether they have legal ties to the Ugandan nation. Finally, the Anti-Homosexuality Bill requires that its provisions override any commitment to international agreements or protocols that recognize the rights of LGBT persons to the extent of the inconsistency between the two. As a responsible member of the international community, the United States cannot condone such a bill becoming law.

The Anti-Homosexuality Bill legislates against the fundamental democratic right of freedom from fear of physical harm by one's own government. This legislation would undermine the government of Uganda's commitment to democracy at a most basic level, significantly damage its relations with the international community, and risk inciting greater hate-motivated violence within Uganda itself. Its mere existence almost certainly will lead to violence against individuals who either are LGBT or are rumored to be LGBT, their families, and community leaders in their places of worship, homes, schools, and businesses.

Furthermore, I am deeply concerned about the consequences that this bill would have on public health in Uganda as it attempts to combat HIV/AIDS. The stigmatization of homosexual identity and behavior continues to stymie efforts to fight HIV/AIDS in the United States and abroad. The bill's criminalization of homosexuality will undoubtedly discourage individuals from having the open and honest discussions about their sexual health and behavior that are crucial to lessening the spread and burden of this infection.

I commend President Obama and State Secretary Clinton for denouncing this bigoted legislation and am pleased to acknowledge that their sentiments have been publicly shared by the European Union, Canada, and other nations and international human rights groups. In addition, I also applaud those Ugandans, including Senior Advisor to President Museveni, John Nagenda, who have spoken out in opposition to this bill and urge them to fight it when Uganda's parliament enters discussions on the matter in February or March of this year.

I am further encouraged by Secretary Clinton's commitment to protect "the rights of the LGBT community worldwide" and will continue working to ensure that sexual orientation and gender identity not constitute the basis for criminal penalties, harassment, or discrimination. It is my fervent hope that Congress will show a similar commitment to its own LGBT citizens as it is called upon to repeal discriminatory legislation such as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the Defense of Marriage Act.

Madam Speaker, I unequivocally condemn the Anti-Homosexuality Bill in the strongest possible terms and urge the government of Uganda to withdraw this bill and support the inalienable human rights of all people.

CONGRATULATING RODNEY KAY

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Rodney Kay, named my State's 2009–10 "Assistant Principal of the Year" by the Georgia Association of Sec-

ondary School Principals. Rodney, head of Curriculum and Instruction at Heard County High School in Franklin, will represent the Peach State well when he competes for the national title in March.

Rodney won this award after serving as an administrator for only two years. This recognition so early in his career demonstrates the passion and commitment he brings to educating young people. His leadership, combined with the talents of all the fine educators at Heard County High, quickly brought demonstrable results. The school has achieved new records in test scores, and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement named Heard County as one of only nine schools to attain "platinum" status in the 2008–09 school year.

Rodney's win was not only well-deserved, but it also had the additional benefit of bringing positive attention to Heard County students' accomplishments, said Principal Rusty Sowell. "It is a tremendous honor to be selected, and it speaks for itself with the things he has done and helped us achieve," Sowell continued.

This success might derive from Rodney's team player approach with teachers. Rodney knows first-hand the challenges as well as the joys that come with serving directly in the classroom. Before his promotion to assistant principal at Heard County, he worked as a Spanish teacher for 13 years in his hometown of Carrollton.

As a Member of Congress, I greatly appreciate efforts to honor the outstanding public servants who dedicate their lives to enlightening the next generation of Americans. Our teachers rank among our greatest resources. They put their own hearts on the line for students facing educational hardships or troubled home lives. They also know the triumph of seeing students learn, overcome obstacles, achieve academic excellence and go on to successful college and professional careers.

Rodney Kay obviously has approached this calling with fervor and passion—and with an eye on a higher purpose. "I believe I am in the school to serve teachers and students, and I have been placed on this Earth to serve God and others," Rodney said.

We appreciate that service from Rodney and his fellow educators. On behalf of the people of Georgia's 3rd District, I congratulate him on this honor and wish him the best of luck as he advances to the next level.

RECOGNIZING STEELE CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CHARLOTTE, NC

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Mrs. MYRICK. Madam Speaker, I would like to honor and recognize Steele Creek Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC. Steele Creek Presbyterian was founded in 1760, and this year, they celebrate their 250th anniversary as a church community.

As one of the oldest churches in our area, Steele Creek Presbyterian Church is a cornerstone in the Charlotte community. Its membership is dedicated to the service of others, whether by providing food to area shelters, manpower to local Habitat for Humanity